

109TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 59

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 7 (legislative day, OCTOBER 6), 2005

Received and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Recognizing the contributions of African-American basketball teams and players for their achievements, dedication, and contributions to the sport of basketball and to the Nation.

Whereas, even though African-Americans were excluded from playing in organized white-only leagues, the desire of African-Americans to play basketball could not be repressed;

Whereas, unlike baseball, which had Negro leagues, basketball had no organized black leagues, thus forcing blacks to take to the road out of necessity;

Whereas among the most well-known black barnstorming teams who found their beginnings in the 1920s were the New York Renaissance (or Rens), the Harlem Globetrotters, the New York Enforcers, the Harlem Clowns, the Harlem Road Kings, the Harlem Stars, the Harlem Ambassadors, and the Philadelphia Tribunes;

Whereas, despite the racism they faced, Negro basketball teams overcame great obstacles to play the game before black players were allowed to play in the National Basketball Association in the early 1950s;

Whereas the New York Rens became one of the first great basketball dynasties in the history of the game, compiling a 2,588–539 record in its 27-year existence, winning 88 straight games in the 1932–33 season, and winning the 1939 World Professional Championship;

Whereas the Harlem Globetrotters proved that they were capable of beating professional teams like the World Champions Minneapolis Lakers led by basketball great George Mikan in 1948;

Whereas the barnstorming African-American basketball teams included exceptionally talented players and shaped modern-day basketball by introducing a new style of play predicated on speed, short crisp passing techniques, and vigorous defensive play;

Whereas among the pioneers who played on black barnstorming teams included players such as Tarzan Cooper, Pop Gates, John Isaacs, Willie Smith, Sweetwater Clifton, Ermer Robinson, Bob Douglas, Pappy Ricks, Runt Pullins, Goose Tatum, Marques Haynes, Bobby Hall, Babe Pressley, Bernie Price, Ted Strong, Inman Jackson, Duke Cumberland, Fat Jenkins, Eddie Younger,

Lou Badger, Zachary Clayton, Jim Usry, Sonny Boswell,  
and Puggy Bell;

Whereas the struggles of these players and others paved the  
way for current African American professional players,  
who are playing in the National Basketball Association  
today;

Whereas the style of black basketball was more conducive to  
a wide open, fast-paced spectator sport;

Whereas, by achieving success on the basketball court, Afri-  
can-American basketball players helped break down the  
color barrier and integrate African-Americans into all as-  
pects of society in the United States;

Whereas, during the era of sexism and gender barriers, barn-  
storming African-American basketball was not limited to  
men's teams, but included women's teams as well, such  
as the Chicago Romas and the Philadelphia Tribunes;

Whereas only in recent years has the history of African-  
Americans in team sports begun receiving the recognition  
it deserves;

Whereas basketball is a uniquely modern and uniquely Amer-  
ican sport;

Whereas the Black Legends of Professional Basketball Foun-  
dation, founded by former Harlem Globetrotter Dr. John  
Kline, of Detroit, Michigan, honors and highlights the  
significant contributions of these pioneers and their im-  
pact on professional basketball today; and

Whereas the hard work and efforts of the foundation have  
been instrumental in bringing African-American induct-  
ees into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame  
in Springfield, Massachusetts: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
2 *concurring), That—*

3           (1) Congress recognizes the teams and players  
4       of the barnstorming African-American basketball  
5       teams for their achievement, dedication, sacrifices,  
6       and contribution to basketball and to the Nation  
7       prior to the integration of the white professional  
8       leagues;

9           (2) current National basketball Association  
10       players should pay a debt of gratitude to those great  
11       pioneers of the game of basketball and recognize  
12       them at every possible opportunity; and

13          (3) a copy of this resolution be transmitted to  
14       the Black Legends of Professional Basketball Foun-  
15       dation, which has recognized and commemorated the  
16       achievements of African-American basketball teams,  
17       the National Basketball Association, and the  
18       Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.

      Passed the House of Representatives October 6,  
2005.

Attest:

JEFF TRANDAHL,

*Clerk.*